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Department of State

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Action

Control:

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Rec'd:

OCTOBER 30, 1962

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FROM: PHNOM PENH

Info

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TO: Secretary of State

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NO: 377, OCTOBER 30.

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IN ONE HOUR'S CONVERSATION WITH SIHANOUK TODAY I BEGAN BY EXPLAINING CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH PREVENTED THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ON CUBA BEING ADDRESSED TO SIHANOUK (DEPTEL 314). LATTER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION THIS EXPLANATION BUT ADDED HE WAS PLEASED MESSAGE HAD BEEN ADDRESSED TO PRIME MINISTER AS CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT SINCE HE (SIHANOUK) WAS TRYING DIVEST HIMSELF OF SUCH DUTIES. I CONTINUED WITH EXPRESSION PRESIDENT'S HOPE SIHANOUK COULD INSTRUCT HIS DELEGATION UN SUPPORT US POSITIONS ON CUBAN DEVELOPMENTS. SIHANOUK REFERRED TO PRIME MINISTER KANTOL'S REPLY TO THE PRESIDENT, COPY OF WHICH HAS JUST BEEN RECEIVED FROM FOREIGN OFFICE (INDICATING MESSAGE SENT TO THE PRESIDENT BY KANTOL OCTOBER 28, PRESUMABLY THROUGH RKG EMBASSY WASHINGTON). AS KANTOL INDICATED, AND AS KANTOL HIMSELF INFORMED ME OCTOBER 29, RKG IN KEEPING WITH ITS POLICY NEUTRALITY IS NOT TAKING SIDES ON CUBA QUESTION, BUT IS SUPPORTING UN EFFORTS FIND PEACEFUL SOLUTION.

WHEN I EXPRESSED HOPE RKG COULD DELAY EXCHANGE REPRESENTATIVES WITH CUBA FOLLOWING ELEVATION LEGATIONS TO EMBASSIES, SIHANOUK LAUNCHED INTO LENGTHY EXPLANATION

AND ENDING UP BY SAYING IN EFFECT US SHOULD BE SATISFIED CAMBODIA TAKING NEUTRAL POSITION. HE DID NOT AT FIRST INDICATE WILLINGNESS DELAY EXCHANGE REPRESENTATIVES WITH CUBA, EXCEPT TO SAY THAT NO RKG REPRESENTATIVE WOULD BE SENT FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AT BEST. WHEN I EMPHASIZED UNFAVORABLE IMPRESSION IN US PUBLIC OPINION, PRESS AND

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-2- 377, OCTOBER 30, FROM PHNOM PENH

CONGRESSIONAL CIRCLES IF RKG SHOULD RECEIVE CUBAN REPRESENTATIVE DURING PRESENT CRITICAL PERIOD, SIHANOUK REJOINED AMERICAN PRESS WAS ALREADY FREQUENTLY CRITICAL OF CAMBODIA. I POINTED OUT THERE WERE MANY FAVORABLE PRESS COMMENTS ON CAMBODIA BUT AMERICAN PRESS LIKELY TO BE UNANIMOUSLY UNFAVORABLE IF RKG SHOULD NOW RECEIVE CUBAN REPRESENTATIVE

IN CONVERSATION I DREW ON PERTINENT MESSAGES IN EXPLAINING US POSITION ON CUBA AND LEFT WITH HIM TEXT PERTINENT SPEECHES AND COPIES APPROPRIATE BACKGROUND MATERIAL ON CUBA. MADE PARTICULAR POINT OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US BASES TURKEY AND ITALY AND SOVIET WEAPONS CUBA WHEN HE HIMSELF TRIED DRAW PARALLEL. WARNED THAT DESPITE WELCOME MESSAGE FROM KHRUSHCHEV, BASIC PROBLEMS OF REMOVAL SOVIET OFFENSIVE WEAPONS UNDER UN CONTROL AND INSPECTION STILL REMAINED AND EMPHASIZED INSTALLATION THESE WEAPONS HAD LED TO TENSION AND CRISIS. ALSO GAVE BRIEF DESCRIPTION CUBAN-US RELATIONS DURING RECENT YEARS IN ORDER EMPHASIZE UE PATIENCE AND DIFFICULTIES IN DEALING WITH CASTRO.

CONVERSATION HELPFUL IN CORRECTING SOME APPARENT MISCONCEPTIONS ON CUBAN DEVELOPMENTS, BUT RKG NEUTRAL ATTITUDE RE CUBA STILL SEEMS BEST WE CAN HOPE FOR.

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